

**18<sup>th</sup> Annual Birth to Three Institute**

**Inclusive From the Start:  
Maximizing Belonging for Children  
with Disabilities and Family Members**

July 30, 2014

Co-Facilitated by:

**Linda Brault**  
West Ed



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Full Circle Consulting Systems Inc.



**Objectives**

By the end of the presentation, participants will be able to

- Identify benefits of inclusion for children with disabilities, children who are typically developing, EHS teachers, family members, and the community
- Utilize strategies that help children with disabilities or other special needs thrive in early care and education settings
- Describe sensitive methods for supporting families of children when identified with disabilities from the prenatal period through age three



**Agenda**

- Welcome!
- Setting the Stage for Inclusion
- It's About Belonging
- Definition and Benefits of Inclusion
- When Concerns Arise: Responsive Conversations with Very Young Children and Families
- Strategies to Maximize Inclusion
- Closing Thoughts and Reflections



**Focus on Attitudes:  
Setting the Stage for Inclusion**

- The right attitude can go a long way




## Who are Children with Disabilities or Special Needs?

- Children with identified disabilities
- Children who require additional help or support due to behavior, health, or developmental issues
- *Remember, not all children will be identified when they first enter infant/toddler group care.*





## It's About Belonging

1. Think for a moment about your own experiences with belonging to someone or something. What matters most to you about those experiences?
2. Share with your group what the word 'belonging' means to you.
3. As a small group capture your reflections and create an image, word, and/or symbol of what it means to belong.
4. Prepare to share your reflections.



## Maslow's Hierarchy



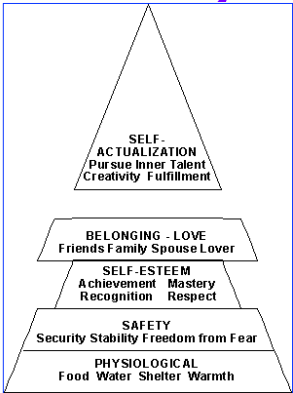
**SELF-ACTUALIZATION**  
Pursue Inner Talent  
Creativity Fulfillment

**SELF-ESTEEM**  
Achievement Mastery  
Recognition Respect

**BELONGING - LOVE**  
Friends Family Spouse Lover

**SAFETY**  
Security Stability Freedom from Fear

**PHYSIOLOGICAL**  
Food Water Shelter Warmth



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Kunc, N. (1992) The Need to Belong: Rediscovering Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. in: Villa, R., Thousand, J., Stainback, W. & Stainback, S. Restructuring for Caring & Effective Education. Baltimore: Paul Brookes.  
Available at <http://www.normemma.com/armaflow.htm>

## It's About Belonging

*"When inclusion ... is fully embraced, we abandon the idea that children have to become 'normal' in order to contribute to the world. Instead, we search for and nourish the gifts that are inherent in all people. We begin to look beyond typical ways of becoming valued members of the community, and, in doing so, begin to realize the achievable goal of providing all children with an authentic sense of belonging."*

Norman Kunc, [www.normemma.com](http://www.normemma.com)






## All of Us Want to Belong

- Families want a sense that they belong to their communities
- Children need to belong in order to learn and grow
- Staff want to feel connected





## Benefits and Supports

- Take a few moments to walk around the room and share your thoughts on the benefits of inclusion
- You may also brainstorm on the handout grid (*handout, page 6*)






## Who Benefits?

- Let's look at your thoughts
- Children with Special Needs
- Children who are Typically Developing
- Parents and Family Members
- Teachers and Staff
- Specialists
- Community




## Why Focus on the Benefits?



- The benefits are real and important to communicate to caregivers, families, and specialists
- With benefits firmly in mind, we are willing to work through barriers
- This helps keep us going when things get tough



## Belonging



Belonging is Promoted through Inclusive Practice





## Inclusion means different things to different people

Samuel Odom,  
Leading researcher in  
preschool inclusion





## What is Inclusion?

- The full and active participation of children with disabilities or other special needs in community activities, services and programs designed for typically developing children, including child care
- If support, accommodations or modifications are needed to ensure full, active participation, these are provided appropriately in the setting



## Inclusive practice happens when:

- The interests, strengths, unique characteristics, and needs of ALL children are considered when planning activities, environments, and interactions
- Family members, infant care teachers, and specialists talk together about how to promote each child's belonging in the setting
- Appropriate adaptations, accommodations, supports, and services are available and provided whenever needed to promote authentic belonging





**Fear is the Biggest Barrier**

- Not fear OF the child
- Fear FOR the child
- With knowledge, this fear fades and competence blooms
- You can be successful at including children with disabilities or other special needs in your program






**Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood.**

Marie Curie




**Can I Include Children?**


- Absolutely! Most of you already are. Here are some things to know:
- You probably will not need to make major modifications to your program to do so
- You may be able to receive assistance and support for the changes you do need to make
- You will find that building an inclusive child care program will be rewarding for all the children, families and staff in your child care program—and for you



**Inclusion Works! Creating Child Care Programs that Promote Belonging for Children with Special Needs**

**Developed by Linda Brault**  
Project Director, MAP to Inclusion and Belonging.....Making Access Possible  
WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies  
[www.CAInclusion.org/camap/inclusionworks.html](http://www.CAInclusion.org/camap/inclusionworks.html)





## Identity Formation

- Children want to know “Who am I to You?”
- What messages do you give?
- If a child has a disability or special need, do you emphasize his or her competence?
- Focus on Belonging






Available for Downloading  
[www.CAinclusion.org/camap/trainingppts.html](http://www.CAinclusion.org/camap/trainingppts.html)

## Talking with Parents When You Have Concerns About a Child in Your Care


Developed by  
**California MAP to Inclusion & Belonging**  
 WestEd Center for Child & Family Studies  
 Based on the article “Talking with Parents When Concerns Arise”  
 by Linda Brault and Janet Gonzalez-Mena


California MAP to Inclusion & Belonging is funded by the California Department of Education, Child Development Division, with a portion of the federal Child Care Development Fund Quality Improvement Allocation



## Honest, Respectful Responses


<p><b>For Children</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give simple, honest answers to questions</li> <li>• Be aware of the message being given about the child’s identity and belonging</li> <li>• Discuss possible questions &amp; appropriate responses with family members and others staff for consistency of message</li> </ul>	<p><b>For Family Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be welcoming! Learn about the child and how the disability affects the child’s development</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for family members to share the information they want shared with one another</li> <li>• Assure respect for confidentiality</li> <li>• <i>See handout for additional ideas</i></li> </ul>
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## Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them become what they are capable of being

Goethe





**The single most powerful thing you can do for children is to believe in them.**

-Starpower Foundation



## Contact Information

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